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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1998-2001

Programme 19. Human rights

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19.1 The purpose of the United Nations human rights programme is to promote universal enjoyment of all human rights by giving practical effect to the will and resolve of the world community as expressed by the United Nations. Its mandate derives from Articles 1, 13 and 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/121 of 20 December 1993, the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as defined in resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, international human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations and the resolutions and decisions of policy-making bodies. The programme is based on the principles of the Vienna Declaration, including the principle that democracy, development and respect for human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing and that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated and must be treated globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis, universally, objectively and non-selectively.

19.2 The programme is under the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its objectives are to provide leadership on human rights issues and to emphasize the importance of human rights on the international and national agendas; to promote international cooperation for human rights; to stimulate and coordinate action across the whole United Nations system; to promote universal ratification and implementation of international standards and to assist in the development of new norms; to support human rights organs and treaty monitoring bodies; to anticipate potential serious violations and react to violations; to emphasize preventive human rights action and promote the establishment of national human rights infrastructures; to undertake human rights field activities and operations and to provide education, information, advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights.

19.3 By the end of the period covered by this plan, it is expected that the following will have been accomplished:

(a) A significant enhancement and strengthening of international cooperation in the field of human rights leading to increased effectiveness of international machinery, improved respect of human rights at the national level, through, inter alia, universal ratification of basic international human rights treaties and the incorporation of those standards into the domestic legislation of States;

(b) A major strengthening of coordination for human rights across the United Nations system leading to a comprehensive and integrated approach to the promotion and protection of human rights based on the contribution of each agency and programme and on improved inter-agency cooperation and coordination;

(c) The adoption and implementation of an integrated and multidimensional strategy for the promotion and protection of the right to development accompanied by a significant enhancement of support from relevant United Nations bodies for that purpose;

(d) A significant increase in recognition of economic, social and cultural rights and in activities for their protection, including the integration of

economic, social and cultural rights as human rights into the strategies and programmes of international organizations, agencies and financial and developmental institutions, the identification of indicators showing success in respecting those rights and the adoption of a communications procedure relating to non-compliance with economic, social and cultural rights;

(e) The adoption and progressive implementation of an improved treaty monitoring system dealing with multiple reporting obligations and based on a comprehensive national approach;

(f) The implementation of a strengthened system of special procedures based on harmonization and rationalization of work;

(g) The reinforcement of the United Nations as the unique worldwide forum for the discussion and resolution of human rights matters of international concern, with the participation of all relevant actors;

(h) The adoption of more effective methods within the United Nations to deal with acute violations of human rights, to remove obstacles to the full realization of human rights and to prevent the continuation of violations of human rights;

(i) The implementation of a comprehensive United Nations programme to assist States, at their request, to develop and implement national human rights plans of action strengthening, inter alia, national structures having an impact on democracy and the rule of law, the establishment of national institutions, to give effect to the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights;

(j) The inclusion of a human rights dimension, as appropriate, into United Nations peace-keeping and humanitarian operations and activities, the training of those involved and increased efficiency in developing and deploying human rights field presences;

(k) The full integration of the human rights of women and the girl child into the activities of the United Nations system as a whole and its human rights machinery in particular;

(l) The implementation of effective measures to promote equality, dignity and tolerance, to fight racism and xenophobia, and to protect minorities, indigenous populations, migrant workers, the disabled and others;

(m) The establishment of effective programmes of education and public information and the strengthened participation of non-governmental organizations, national institutions, grass-roots organization and civil society in United Nations human rights activities at all levels;

(n) The provision to States, United Nations bodies, experts and the academic community of high-quality research and analysis on human rights issues, including dealing with emerging problems and developing new standards and instruments.

Subprogramme 19.1 Right to development, research and analysis

19.4 This subprogramme will be implemented by the Research and Right to Development Branch.

19.5 With regard to the right to development, the objectives will be to develop an integrated and multidimensional strategy for the implementation, coordination and promotion of the right to development in accordance with the Declaration on the Right to Development, aimed at facilitating action to be taken by relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including treaty bodies, international development and financial institutions and non-governmental organizations, for the implementation of the right to development, ensuring the realization of the right to development across the human rights programme and by specialized agencies and United Nations treaty bodies; to promote national implementation of the right to development through coordination with State-appointed officials; to identify obstacles at the national and international levels; and to promote awareness about the content and importance of the right to development, including through information and educational activities.

19.6 With regard to research and analysis, the objectives will be to strengthen respect for human rights by increasing knowledge, awareness and understanding of human rights issues through data collection, research and analysis. These objectives will be pursued within the framework of the indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and will be aimed at facilitating the implementation of standards, the work of treaty bodies, special rapporteurs and other bodies, the preparation of new standards, ensuring the recognition on the national and international level of economic, social and cultural rights, promoting democracy and strengthening national human rights institutions and procedures for the rule of law, contributing to the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and new forms of discrimination, strengthening the recognition of the human rights of women and children, and the protection of vulnerable groups such as minorities, migrant workers and indigenous people.

Subprogramme 19.2 Supporting human rights bodies and organs

19.7 This subprogramme will be implemented by the Support Services Branch. The objectives are to support the United Nations human rights bodies and organs and to facilitate their deliberations by ensuring and enhancing their effective functioning; to improve existing procedures through rationalization and streamlining, and the coordination of the participation of Governments, experts, specialized agencies, other international organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations in their work; and to ensure the analytical capacity of human rights treaty bodies for the review of State party reports under international treaties and for the processing of communications.

Subprogramme 19.3 Advisory services, technical cooperation, support to human rights fact-finding procedures and field activities

19.8 This subprogramme will be implemented by the Activities and Programmes Branch. In the area of advisory services and technical cooperation, the objectives are to assist countries, at their request, in developing

comprehensive national plans of action to promote and protect human rights and to provide advice and support specific projects to promote respect for human rights; to develop a comprehensive and coordinated United Nations programme to help States in building and strengthening national structures for human rights promotion and protection; and to raise awareness and promote specialized knowledge about human rights through the organization of training courses, seminars and workshops, and the production of a wide range of educational, training and information material.

19.9 In the area of support to fact-finding bodies the objectives are to ensure the effective functioning of human rights monitoring mechanisms by assisting special rapporteurs/representatives, experts and working groups mandated by policy-making bodies, including through the preparation of information regarding alleged violations and situations for review and the provision of support for missions and meetings; and to enhance the efficiency of action by policy-making bodies by providing analytical information on human rights situations.

19.10 With respect to field activities, the objectives are to ensure the efficiency of field missions and presences through the maintenance of contacts with Governments, appropriate sectors of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and others by supporting and developing such activities through the development of training programmes and materials for human rights field staff and training in human rights for the appropriate components of other United Nations field operations.